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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Bernadette House, South Park, Lincoln

NGR: SK 9727 6958

Site Code: LSP 97

LCNCC Museum Accession No: 227.97

Archaeological Evaluation

for

Stephen Roberts Associates

on behalf of

Mrs B Browne

September 1997

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Summary

Two trial trenches were dug on the site of a proposed extension at the rear of Bernadette House, South Park, Lincoln. Two features were found in the westernmost trench; a fairly shallow pit, and a ditch. Pottery finds date both of these to the medieval period. There were no archaeological features in the eastern trench.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by Stephen Roberts Associates, on behalf of Mrs B Browne, to undertake an archaeological investigation of land to the rear of Bernadette House, South Park, Lincoln. The specification for this work, prepared in accordance with the requirements of Lincolnshire City Council, included provision for machining the topsoil from two 5m x 1.5m trenches, followed by hand excavation of archaeological features.

Site Location

Bernadette House Residential Home is situated on the south side of South Park, towards its western end. It is to the west of Queens Park School, and the south-western boundary is formed by the line of the Lincoln to Grantham railway, closed in 1965. Beyond the railway cutting lies the South Common. The north-west corner of the Common, the traditional site of the spring and autumn Pleasure Fairs, bounds the site to the west.

To the south, the land rises steeply to the limestone ridge at Cross o' Cliff Hill. The low-lying land to the north is on the old flood-plain of the Witham, and the site overlies alluvial sands.

There is an existing modern extension to the south of the house. The area of the evaluation is a strip of land running south and south-west from this, with two 45° bends, which forms the site of a proposed further extension. At present, it is part of the garden, with lawn, flower beds and small ornamental and fruit trees.

Archaeological Background

The Fosse Way and Ermine Street, which were the two main Roman roads leading south from Lincoln pass within 150m of the site to the west. Although the exact alignment of these roads is not known, it is believed that Ermine Street followed closely the line of the present day High Street, while Fosse Way ran further to the west. The junction between them was probably close to the point where Monson Street joins the High Street. The line of the Roman roads crossed the Sincil drain at Bargate, just to the north of the modern junction of South Park and the High Street. The Sincil is probably

Roman, and probably marked the southern boundary of the Roman town. It runs close to the north side of South Park opposite the site, before turning north and running parallel to the High Street. There seems to have been considerable ribbon development spreading south from the city along these roads, but the excavated evidence for this comes mainly from the area of the High Street to the south of the river crossing. The present river banks and margins of Brayford Pool are the result of extensive consolidation and reclamation work; the area around the High Street would formerly have been relatively isolated. It seems to have been an extensive extra-mural southern suburb to the Roman city.

The site and nature of the original settlement of Wigford is not known. The first element of the name, Old English *wic*, can have a wide variety of meanings including 'village', 'street', 'dwelling' or 'dairy-farm' (Ekwall, 1960). The general meaning was 'trading place' has been suggested but no archaeological evidence for any extensive settlement has been found (Steane, 1990b). The *-ford* was presumably the river crossing by the present High Bridge, and it seems likely that this formed the focus of settlement. The area may have been an Anglo-Saxon enclave, following the establishment of the Scandinavian borough in the city (Steane and Vince, 1993). The extent and importance of the area in the later Anglo-Saxon and early medieval periods can be judged from the presence of at least twelve churches in addition to St Mary's Guildhall (Steane, 1990a). The survival of Anglo-Saxon or early Norman masonry features in at least four churches is especially noteworthy.

In general, the area has escaped the attention of archaeological study, which has tended to concentrate more on the city centre. It is, nevertheless, of considerable interest as an example of a Roman suburb, its transition to an Anglo-Saxon settlement, and its subsequent medieval development.

The Sincil drain probably continued to function as the south and west boundary of the city through the early medieval period, so that the South Common area would have been beyond the limits of the development at this time.

In the early years of the twelfth century a leper hospital, the Hospital of the Holy Innocents or the Melandry, was established east of the road between the Bargate and the foot of Cross Cliff Hill (Hill, 1990). It is recorded as having a church, as well as several houses built on 'le grene'. Its precise location is uncertain, but the plot of land occupied by Bernadette House and Queens Park School may represent the original area of encroachment onto the South Common by this hospital. A stone coffin, found when the railway was built and finds of disarticulated human skeletal remains in April 1997 from the side of the cutting are presumed to come from the churchyard (Trimble, 1997). After the dissolution, the land of 'le Mellandrye' was granted to William Cecil. It was conveyed to the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty in 1767.

South Park was laid out in 1868, after the building of the railway, by the Corporation of Lincoln (Canwick Common) Act which also authorised sale of the land severed from the main area of the common by the railway. Normanby House, which became the vicarage house of St Botolph's and is now the main part of Bernadette House was subsequently built on the site of the Melandry. By the 1930's St Catherines High School for Girls had been established on the site now occupied by Queens Park School (O.S. 1932).

The Trial Trenches

The work was carried out on 10th and 11th September 1997. The locations of the two trenches are shown in Fig 2. For both trenches, the topsoil was removed with a mini-excavator, using a smooth-bladed ditching bucket. The topsoil was a mid-grey, loose, friable, humic loam, becoming sandier towards its base. In thickness, it varied from around 0.30m beneath the cultivated areas of the flower beds to 0.60m beneath the lawn. The subsoil surfaces of both trenches were trowelled clean, and planned. The natural subsoil was a uniform yellow sand in trench 1, but was a darker, more greyish-brown sand, with lighter patches in trench 2.

Trench 1 was devoid of any archaeological features (Fig 3a).

Trench 2 revealed two features (Fig 3b). A shallow pit [4] showed in the west side of the trench, running into the baulk (Fig 4a). The fill of this pit had been much disturbed by animals and by tree roots, making its precise form and extent impossible to determine, but it appeared to be about 1.20m across, with squarish corners and fairly steep sides. Both medieval and early modern pottery was recovered from this feature. With the amount of animal disturbance to its fills, it is quite possible that the later pottery was intrusive, and the pit dated from the late 12th or early 13th centuries, but the possibility that it was from the 18th or 19th centuries cannot be ruled out. A substantial amount of corroded iron was found in the fill towards the base of this feature. This probably came from a single artefact, but its condition is too poor to allow identification. It seems to have been deliberately buried. This suggests either that it no longer had a useful function and burial was a convenient method of disposal, or that it was part of a structure, such as the stanchion of a post, that would normally be set into the ground.

In the north end of the trench, the side of a ditch [5] was visible (Fig 4b). A width of 0.90m was exposed, with the base still sloping down slightly where it ran into the baulk, so it is likely that the full width was rather more than twice this amount. It cut into the natural subsoil to a depth of at least 0.40m. From the length that was visible in the 1.5m wide trench, it appeared to be running in a straight line, with a WNW-ESE alignment. The visible side had a gentle concave slope, to a flattish base. The profile was stepped, either as the result of slumping or because it had been re-cut. It was slightly irregular in plan, probably as a result of root activity. Its fills were generally sandy, banded by thin gravelly layers, and appeared to have been derived from the surrounding natural subsoil by silting. Finds included pottery, tile and animal bone. The pottery assemblage indicates a date of early to mid 13th century.

It is almost all of a type which is unusual in Lincoln, and may have originated from another source to the south of the city.

Discussion

The medieval features found in the second trench indicate activity during this period. The alignment of the ditch appears to be roughly at right angles to the line of the main road, suggesting that it may mark an old field or property boundary. If the land now occupied by Bernadette House and the adjacent school was the site the leper hospital, then this ditch may have formed its southern boundary. The dating evidence from the pottery finds seem to indicate that this ditch was contemporary with the Malandry, but went out of use and silted up during the lifetime of the hospital. A property boundary is shown in this approximate position on the 1932 Ordnance Survey map, but the alignment appears of be different (Fig. 5).

Neither of the trenches uncovered any sign of human skeletal remains. The position of the stone coffin found in the railway cutting appears from the Ordnance Survey map to be just to the east of the wall separating the site from the grounds of Queens Park School. The recent finds were located around 17m south-west of the footbridge on the south side of the cutting, which would over 30m east of this boundary. It may be that this boundary marks the former westward extent of the Malandry graveyard.

Conclusions

On the basis of these two trial trenches, the density of significant features in the area of the proposed development would appear to be low. However, given the presence of some archaeological features and the high potential for remains associated with the leper hospital in areas not covered by the two trial trenches, the site must still be regarded as archaeologically sensitive.

Acknowledgements

LAS would like to thank Stephen Roberts and Mrs Browne for their support and co-operation, together with the staff and residents of Bernadette House.

The work on site was carried out with Sue Farr. Analysis and dating of pottery finds was by Jane Young. Jane Frost helped with the production of this report. The work was co-ordinated by Naomi Field.

Richard Moore
Lindsey Archaeological Services
September 29th 1997

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APPENDIX 1

LSP 97 Post Roman Pottery and Tile Archive by Jane Young

Context	Ware	Sherds	Form	Comments
1	LSW2	1	JUG	? ID;LIGHT FIRING
3	LSW1/2	1	JUG/PIT	? ID;LIGHT FIRING
3	LERTH	1	FLOWERPOT	18-20TH
3	BL	1	?	16-17TH
3	LSW1/2	1	JUG/PIT	CU SPL GLZE
3	LSWA	1	JUG/PIT	SPL GLZE
6	LSW1/2	1	?	-
6	LSW2	1	JUG	-
6	MEDLOC	1	JUG	SPL GLZE
7	LLSW	1	JUG	BASE
7	EMHM	1	GLOB COOK	? ID
7	LSWA	1	JUG	LHJ;LIGHT FIRING FABRIC;SPL GLZE
7	LSWA	1	JUG	THU STRP HANDLE;LIGHT FIRING FABRIC;SPL GLZE
9	LSW2	1	JUG	FE PAINT STRIP

TILE ARCHIVE: LSP97 TILE TYPES BY CONTEXT

Context	Form	Frag	Weight	Subform	Comments
1	PNR	1	0	-	FLAT;MED
3	PNRDISC	2	50	-	FLAT;MED
6	PNRDISC	1	1	-	-
7	PNR	1	0	-	FLAT;MED
9	PNR	1	0	-	FLAT;MED;CREAM FABRIC
9	PNRDISC	1	35	-	FLAT;MED
9	PNRDISC	1	14	-	FLAT;MED
9	PNRDISC	1	10	-	MISC
11	PNR	1	0	-	FLAT;MED

POST-ROMAN POTTERY ARCHIVE: LSP97 HORIZON DATING

Context	Earliest horizon	Latest horizon	Probable horizon	Dating
1	MH4	MH6	-	13th
3	MH3 OR PMH8	MH4 OR EMH	-	late 12th/early 13th or 18/19th
6	MH4	MH6	MH4	early to early/mid 13th
7	MH4 OR MH8	MH4 OR MH10	-	early to early/mid 13th or 15th
9	MH4	MH4	-	early to early/mid 13th
11	MH2	MH10	-	medieval tile only

LSP97: Context Summary

Context	Type	Relationships	Description	Comments
1	Deposit	Above 3,6	Topsoil	Grey humic loam
2	Deposit	Below 4,5	Natural sandy subsoil	Sandy yellow in Tr1, Darker in Tr2
3	Fill	Below 1, Above 4	Fill of Pit	Pot, tile, burnt bone, Fe (large flat obj.) finds
4	Cut	Below 3, Above 2	Pit	Runs into baulk to W, 1.20m across
5	Cut	Below 11, Above 2	Ditch	WNW- ESE aligned, only S side in trench
6	Fill	Below 1, Above 7, Within 5	Top Fill of Ditch	Greyish silty sand, bone & tile finds
7	Fill	Below 6, Above 8, Within 5	Fill of Ditch	Light grey silty sand, pot, bone & tile finds
8	Fill	Below 7, Above 9, Within 5	Darker layer in ditch fills	Mid grey-brown silty sand, bone finds
9	Fill	Below 8, Above 10, Within 5	Ditch Fill	Orangey silty sand, pot, bone, tile, Fe nail
10	Fill	Below 9, Above 11, Within 5	Small lens of sand above primary fill	Greyish white silty sand.
11	Fill	Below 10, Above 5	Primary fill of ditch, only visible in deeper part	Grey-brown silty sand, tile finds

APPENDIX 3

Contents of Site Archive

11 context sheets
2 plans (scale 1:20)
2 sections (scale 1:10)

Architect's plan of site

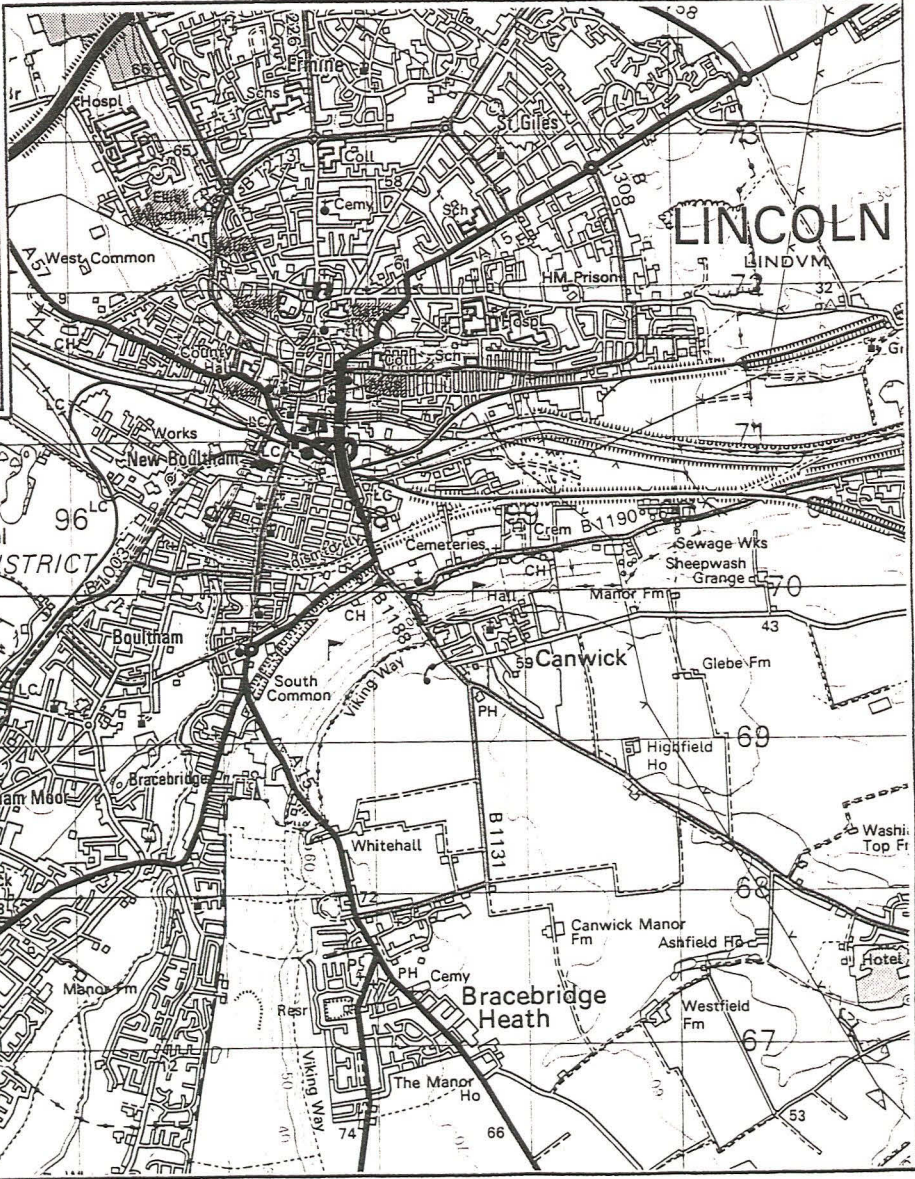
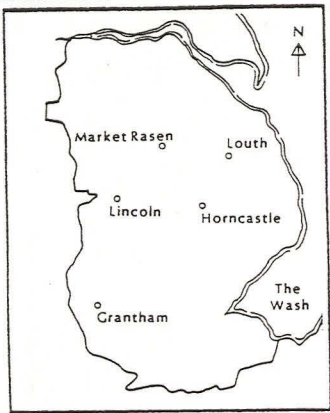
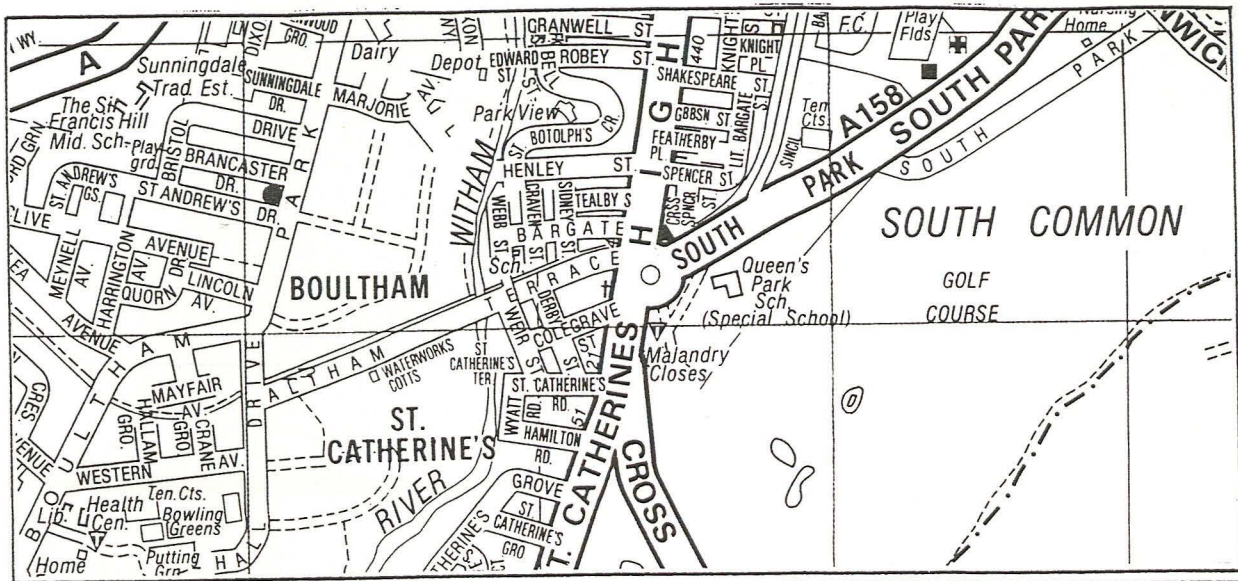


Fig 1: Location of the Site

(Ordnance Survey map reproduced with the permission of the controller of HMSO
LAS Licence no. AL 50424A)

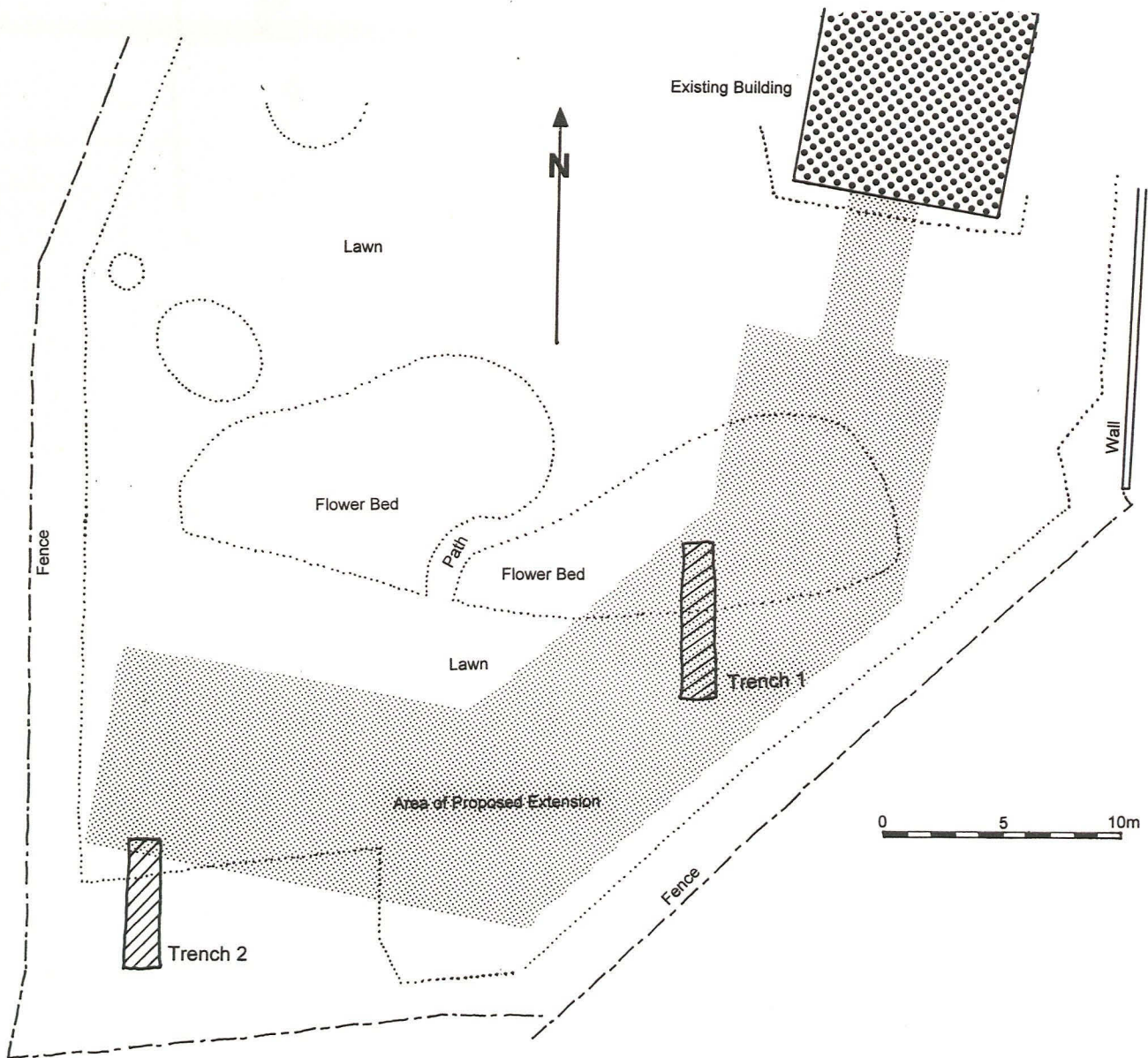
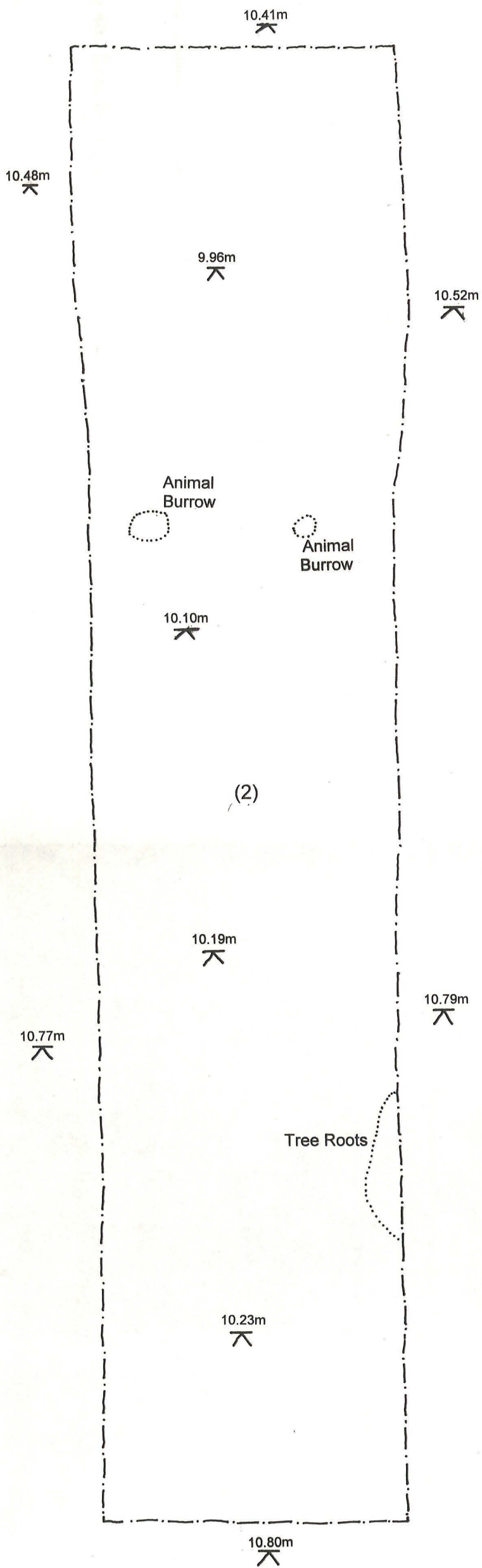
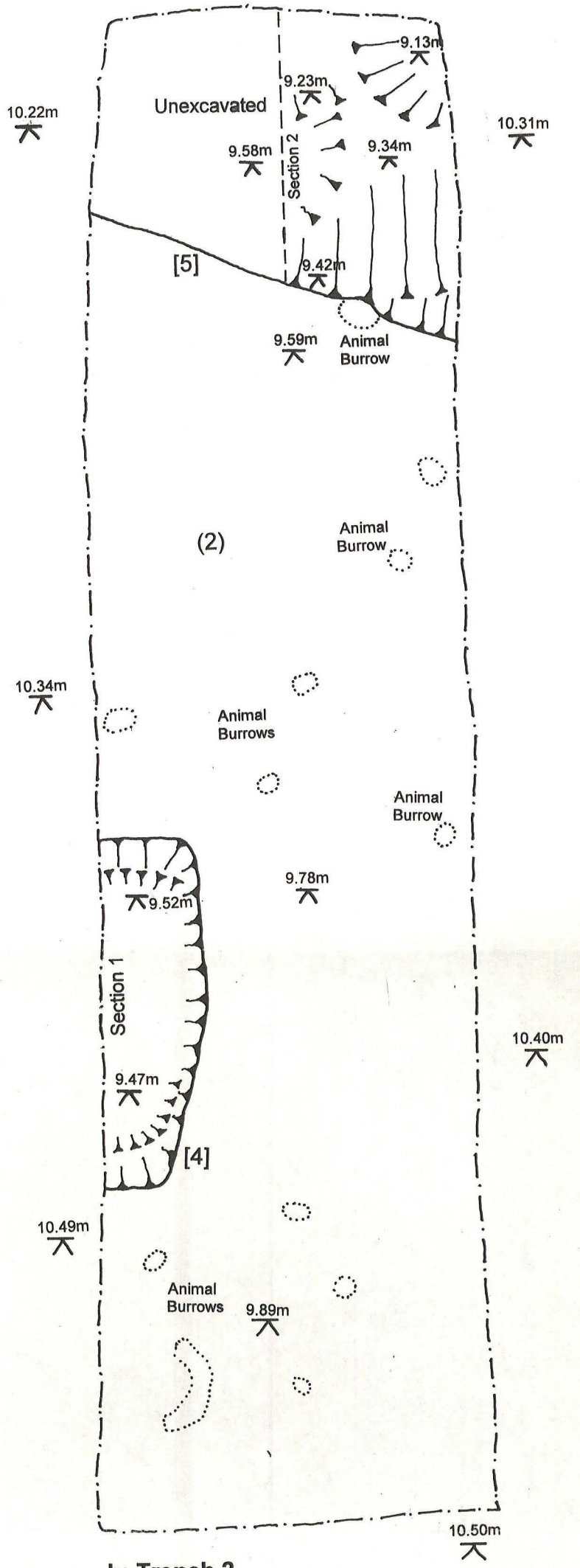


Fig 2: Location of the Trial Trenches



a: Trench 1



b: Trench 2



Fig 3: Plans of the Trial Trenches

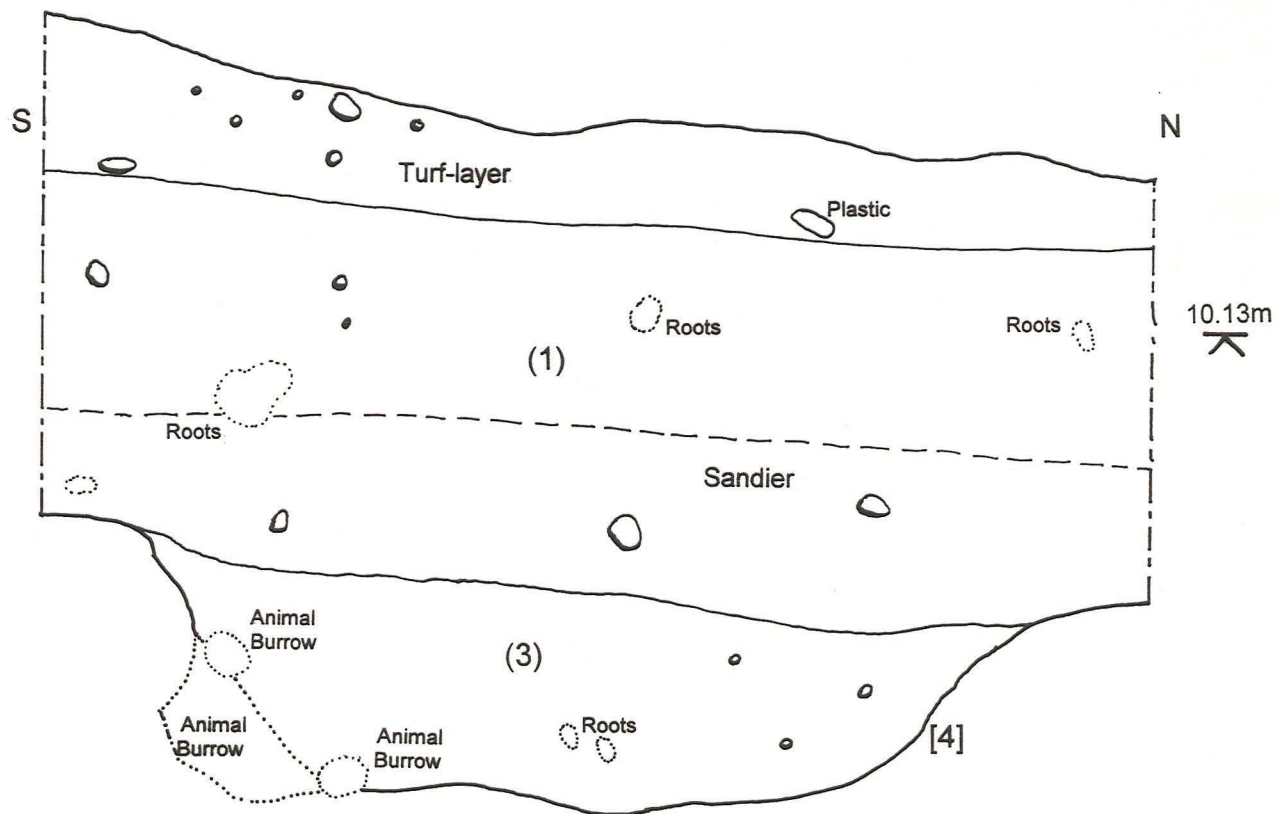


Fig 4a: East-facing Section through Pit [4]

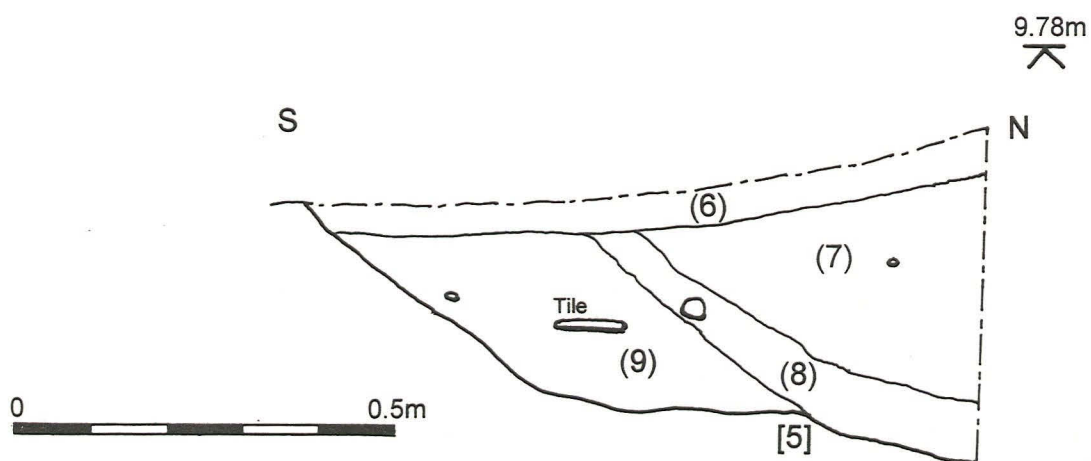


Fig 4b: East-facing Section through Ditch [5]

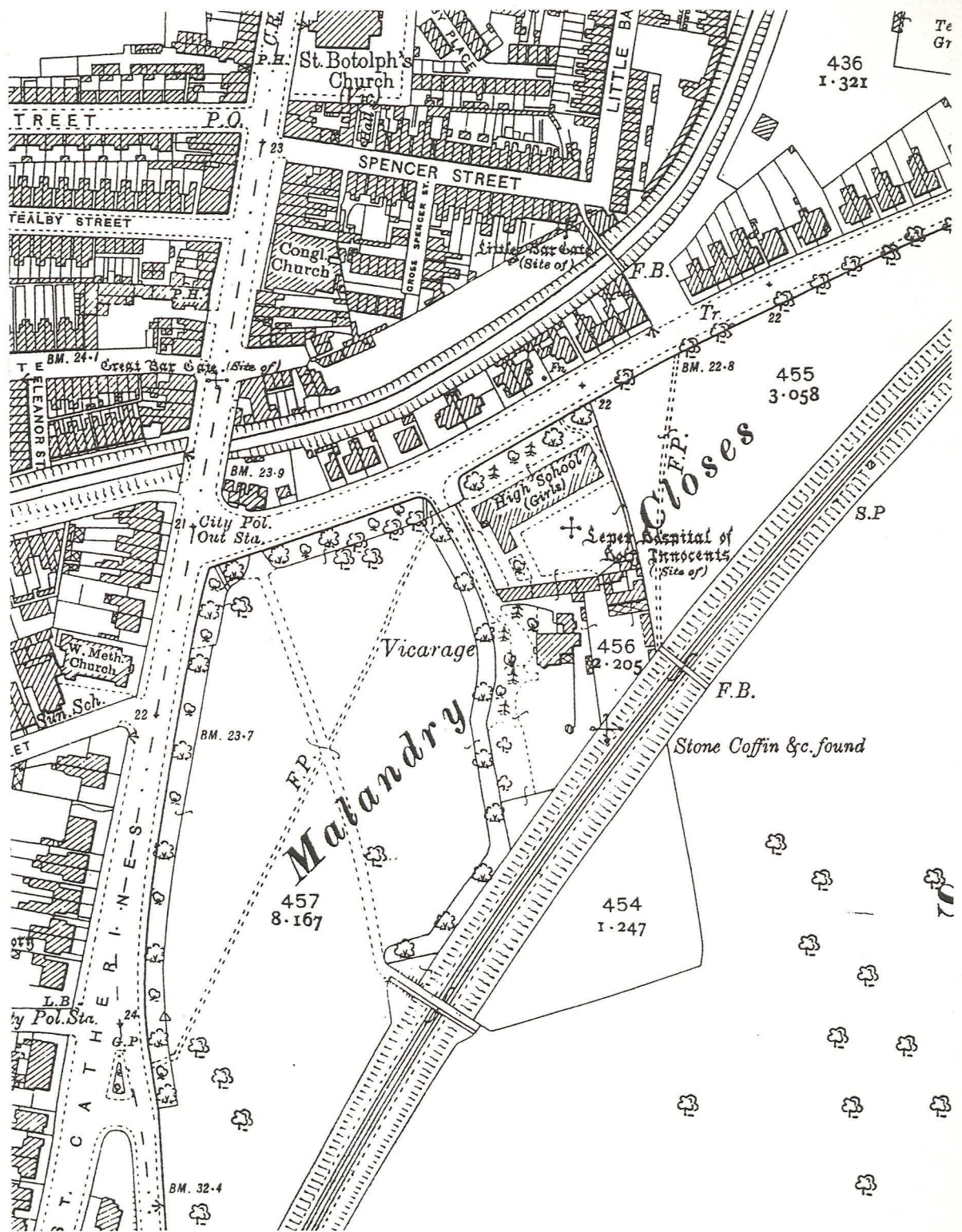


Fig 5: Extract from 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map (1932)